
Press Release

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REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION LEADERS UNITE TO ADDRESS IMPLICATIONS OF HIGH GAS PRICES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES – September 10, 2008 – The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) partnered with six county transportation commissions and Mobility 21 to host a first-time summit leading a regional discussion on the global crisis of high gas prices. More than 100 elected officials, transportation agencies, academics, private sector representatives and community advocates convened at “High Gas Prices: The Tipping Point” at the Omni Los Angeles Hotel to discuss Southern California’s response to the global shortage of oil and to share next steps on crafting public transportation solutions with stable financial resources.

SCAG co-hosted the summit with Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Orange County Transportation Authority, Ventura County Transportation Commission, San Bernardino Associated Governments, Riverside County Transportation Commission, Imperial Valley Associated Governments and Mobility 21.

“California's dependence on foreign oil will lead to catastrophic economic and mobility consequences if we do not find alternative solutions,” said Wendy Greuel, Second District Councilwoman and President Pro Tempore of the Los Angeles City Council. “Southern California leaders are to be congratulated for beginning this important dialogue.”

“Thousands of jobs across major industries in Southern California are potentially impacted by the oil crisis,” said Nancy D. Sidhu, Ph.D., Vice President and Senior Economist of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation. “Finding alternative fuel solutions and implementing them as soon as possible is essential to the economic health and job competitiveness of Southern California.”

Expert panelists discussed consumer responses to the current situation of rising gas prices and also addressed the impact of gasoline consumption on transportation revenues. Representatives from several county transportation commissions were present to give details on

the growing demand for public transportation and to talk about how to develop infrastructure and capacity to meet increased ridership. Recurring topics throughout the summit focused on meeting future transportation challenges with sustainable gas consumption and opportunities to develop long-term, best practice solutions that will lessen the impact of energy dependence on the Southern Californian economy.

“Southern Californians are running on empty with the high gas prices that have distressed our region since last year,” said Hasan Ikhata, SCAG’s Executive Director. “We decided it was the right time to bring policymakers and country transportation commissions together to address this fuel crisis. As we consider our region’s future transportation challenges, it is crucial that we stand together to implement policies and programs to meet this important need for affordable energy and sustainable transportation.”

Faced with long commutes and a high cost of living, Southern Californians have been hit hard from the fuel crisis, with the downturn affecting many areas of the economy. The cost of self-serve regular gasoline averaged \$4.61 per gallon across California in July, an increase of more than \$1.00 per gallon compared to a year ago. With more consumers turning to public transit to meet their daily travel needs, transportation partners and other local leaders were urged to put further support in place for additional public transportation and to diversify the region’s energy consumption with alternative and renewable fuels and technologies.

Presentations and other information from the High Gas Prices summit will be subsequently posted at the event website: www.scag.ca.gov/events/highgasprices.htm.

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